

Under Construction

This week, children will be exploring construction. They will learn the names of big machines and construction vehicles and find out how they are used. They will also be introduced to the different stages (steps) in building.



Word of the Week

construction

Construction is the process of building something.

Use the Word of the Week at home.

You might notice a construction project and talk about the machines you see:

Look at the cement mixer. What do you think these workers are building?

Read About Construction

Read books about construction and construction vehicles to your child. Here are three classics by Virginia Lee Burton: *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*, *Katy and the Big Snow*, and *The Little House*. As you read, ask your child to point to the machines and tell how the workers use them. Explain: *The illustrations in these books were drawn 50 years ago. How are construction vehicles different today?*

More Words to Know

architect
builder
cooperation
floors
foundation
parallel
polygon
straight

Shapes with Straight Sides

Provide craft sticks, toothpicks, straws or narrow pieces of paper. Have your child build a shape. Ask: *How many sides does your shape have? Are the sides straight? parallel? How can you change the shape? Does your shape have a name? What is it?* Practice building and naming more shapes.

Build It Up, Knock It Down

Use Legos™, blocks, or boxes to build structures with your child. Discuss balance and stability as you work. Remember, not only is building fun, but knocking down can be exciting, too. Just be sure to agree on the knocking down time before surprising your child or being surprised yourself when your masterpiece crashes down.

Machines at Work Around Me

Take your child to watch bulldozers and other construction machines at work. Make sure to watch from a safe distance. Visit the same place several different times so that you can see the project at different stages.

Coming Next Week: Children will explore tools that workers use.

Tools



This week, children will be exploring tools. They will talk about the tools that builders, artists, and children use. They will discover that tools make work easier and save time.

Word of the Week

tools

Tools are instruments we use to accomplish a task or get a job done.

Use the Word of the Week at home.

You might ask:

*What tools do we use to paint a picture?
make a sandwich? plant a garden?*

More Words to Know

cut
length
lever
measure
slice
wedge
wheel and axle
work

Cut It Out!

Provide a pair of children's scissors and cut pictures from magazines with your child. Point out that scissors make cutting easier. They are a pair of simple machines (wedges) that work together. On another day, take a piece of scrap paper and challenge your child to cut it into small pieces. Using scissors takes a bit of practice, but it is a great way to improve fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination.

Slice It Up!

Provide a plastic knife and invite your child to help you cut bananas (or other soft fruit) for a tasty snack. Demonstrate how to hold the fruit with one hand and gently press down with the blade. Safety Note: Even plastic knives can cut little fingers. Supervise this activity closely and make sure that your child understands knives are to be used carefully and only with adult supervision.

Measure It!

Use small square crackers or cereal squares to measure the length of a spoon. Count the squares to see how long the spoon is. Compare the length of a spoon to the length of a fork. *How long is a wooden spoon or a spatula?*

Tools All Around My House

As you move through your day, call attention to the simple machines you use. For example, in the kitchen, notice the rolling pin (wheel and axle) and the cookie cutters (wedge). Children will enjoy finding the tools that you use both inside and outside the house.

Coming Next Week: Children will be celebrating their imaginations.

I Can Imagine



This week, children will learn ways to share their imaginative and creative ideas with others.

We will celebrate their imaginations.

Word of the Week

imagination

Using your imagination means to form pictures in your mind of something that you cannot see or is not real.

Use the Word of the Week at home.

You might say:

When we look up at a cloud and see an animal shape, we are using our imaginations.

More Words to Know

create
flip
make-believe
put together
slide
take apart
turn

Dressing Up

Play dress up with your child. Let your child dress in your clothes and then accessorize with jewelry, shoes, and hats. Ask: *Where will you go? What will you do?*

Storytelling

Make up a story filled with imaginary characters, and invite your child to help you decide what each character does. Connect a sequence of actions and give the story an ending. Ask: *What will happen next? And then? How will the story end?* Your child will be exploring and trying out storytelling skills.

It's Good to Dream

Encourage your child to dream and imagine. Share some of your dreams. Imagining is one way that children explore ideas and concepts that are not part of their current life. They are able to sit in a cardboard box and "sail" across the ocean or "launch" into the sky.

Make New Shapes

Cut three squares of paper. Divide one square into triangles by cutting it diagonally from corner to corner. Divide one square into rectangles by cutting it in half. Give the paper shapes to your child and say: *How will you put two shapes together to make a new shape? Which two shapes can you put together to make a big triangle? a parallelogram? a square?* Describe how the paper shapes are turned and moved to create the new shape. Add more paper shapes and enjoy the shape pictures that your child creates.

Coming Next Week: Children will express their creativity in art, music, story, and dance.

My Art Is Me



This week, children will use their imagination to be artists, musicians, storytellers, and dancers.

Word of the Week

creative

Being creative means having the ability to make new things or think of new ideas.

Use the Word of the Week at home. You might say:
*I like the way that you put the vegetables on the platter.
That is very creative.*

A Tent of My Own

Provide sheets and blankets and challenge your child to build a tent. One simple idea is simply to drape the sheet over a small table. Encourage your child to be creative and think of a new tent support, then enjoy reading a book inside the tent together.

More Words to Know

artist
create
imagination
keep track
match
strategy
technique

My Hobbies

Share your creative hobbies with your child. Do you draw or paint? Do you knit or crochet or quilt? Do you bake and decorate cakes? Do you like to garden? Do you work with wood? Invite your child to try out some aspect or technique used in your hobby. Encourage your child to develop a hobby, too.

A One-of-a-Kind Card

Encourage your child to make a thank-you card, birthday card, or a just "thinking of you" card for a friend or family member. Provide a folded paper and art supplies. If your child asks, assist in writing a message on the card. Be sure to have the artist sign the special creation.

Pebble Math

As you and your child are walking outside, collect some small pebbles. Use these pebbles to practice counting out sets. Show four fingers and say: *Count out a set of four pebbles.* Match fingers and pebbles to make sure that there are four in each set. Repeat the activity starting with a different number of fingers and have your child count out a set of pebbles to match the new number. Ask: *What strategy will you use to keep track of your pebbles?*

Coming Next Week: We will begin a new theme focusing on different ways that we move from place to place.